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Kimberley (21)

# LETTER

To the Reverend

Mr. Jonathan Kimberly,

One of the *Proctors* of the Clergy for the  
Diocese of *Coventry* and *Litchfield*,

Concerning His late Sermon before the Lower  
House of Convocation, on the *Fifth* of *Novem-*  
*ber*, 1702. And his Reflections therein on the  
Lord Bishop of *SARUM*.

S I R,

I Have read your Sermon before the Lower House  
of Convocation on the *5th* of *November*, 1702.  
and cannot forbear giving you this Friendly Ad-  
monition concerning it, *viz.* by telling you, That  
in my Opinion (and I desire you to consider seri-  
ously the Reasons I shall offer you for it) you ought  
the next time you say your Prayers, to have this your Ser-  
mon in your Mind, and to confess that in it *You have left*  
*undone what you ought to have done, and have done what you*  
A ought

*ought not to have done.* And first for your Omission, I desire you to consider, Whether it be not a very base and an ungrateful One, wholly to pass by what is over and over again Inserted in the Prayers for the Day, *viz.* The late Deliverance by King *William* from Popery and Arbitrary Power. Was it not a Deliverance? Ought it not to have been mentioned in the Prayers? Is it the less to be regarded because it was but Fourteen Years ago? Does the freshness of a Deliverance make it the less considerable? Or are the groundless evil Surmises that some take up concerning the Author of it under God, and his ill Designs, a sufficient Reason for us to pay no Respect to his Memory, nor so much as to take any Notice of that great and wonderful Deliverance which God wrought by Him in the most needful and seasonable Time? If that be your Opinion, God deliver us from such Protestants as you. I might spend a deal of time in aggravating this your Sin of Omission; but I rather leave it to your own calm and serious Thoughts; heartily wishing you the Grace to Repent of it, and to endeavour to make some Amends for the Scandal you have given by it.

I come next to your Sin of Commission. And here I cannot but take some notice of your own Words immediately going before your Commission of it. "*An over-ruling Power and Goodness, say you, seems to be necessary to preserve us from our selves.*" This I'm afraid was wanting when you set your self to cavil at my Lord of *Sarum*'s Exposition of the First of the Thirty nine Articles: And hence you may do well to apply also to your self the latter part of the same Sentence of your Sermon, which is in these Words: *And the dire Effects of God's withholding his Grace from us, and of our being estranged from him, are no less visible and fatal many times upon our selves than others.* I confess I know not what you mean by these *Effects* being no less visible upon *our selves* than *others*. For who, I beseech you,



you, are those *We*, or *Our selves*, that have any Reason to expect less to lye under these *dire Effects* than others have? I cannot devise whom you should mean by *Our selves* there, unless it be *Our selves* of the Lower House of Convocation. And if that be your Meaning, perhaps you did well to put 'em in mind of the Danger of being *estranged from God*, and of *drawing destruction upon their own heads*. We can none of us be too careful to avoid such Evils and Dangers. And 'tis well you own a Security from 'em to be none of the Rights or Privileges of the Lower House: But whatever Danger they, or any of them may be in, I leave 'em to your kind Admonition, hoping they will consider your Words as there is Occasion. I only consider 'em now with respect to your self; and I desire you would seriously reflect upon it, and then say, Whether for a Presbyter to make unjust, groundless, false, and foolish Reflections upon a Bishop, a Father of the Church, be not one of those *dire Effects of God's withholding his Grace*, but now spoken of? And if it appear that this you your self, Sir, have done, I hope you will find cause to acknowledge your Offence, and to be sensible that at this time you were forsaken of that *over-ruling Power and Goodness which is so necessary to preserve you from your self*.

I proceed therefore to make good my Charge. And here first, I cannot but take notice how wretchedly you blunder in the First Sentence or Period that you have against my Lord of Sarum, pag. 7. of your Sermon; your Words are these; (and let who can, give us the Categorical meaning of 'em) "The Almighty Power of God is so Visible and Necessary in supporting and ordering the whole Frame of the World, that should it be allowed, That *whatever has once a Being, must of its own nature continue still to be, without any new causality or influence*; which is too roundly asserted by a late Expositor: Yet certainly the beautiful Order and regular Motions of

" the several Parts of the World would soon be disturbed  
 " and broken. How the visibility or necessity of God's  
 Power in supporting and ordering the World, should be a  
 means to hinder the beautiful Order and regular Motions  
 of the several Parts of the World from being disturbed or  
 broken, or to cause them so to be, I know not. And there-  
 fore, as I said, I do not well understand this Sentence. On-  
 ly I guess your meaning is, that should it be granted,  
 That whatever Substance once hath a Being, needs no  
 new Causality or Influence to keep it in Being; yet the  
 Order and Motion of the several Parts of the World be-  
 ing not Substances, but Accidents, would be disturbed and  
 broken, if it were not for some new Causality or Influence  
 that preserves them. But if this be your meaning, 'tis for-  
 rily expressed; and besides, I'm afraid it is not true: For  
 if Substances once in Being will continue without any  
 new Causality or Influence, so may the Accidents of Or-  
 der and Motion too, for ought that I see, so care be but  
 taken to prevent any thing from stopping or disturbing 'em.  
 I'm sure you have said nothing to the contrary. But in  
 all this, I find nothing against my Lord of Sarum, save  
 only that you say *'tis too roundly asserted by him, That what-  
 ever hath once a Being, must of its nature continue still to be  
 without any new Causality or Influence.* By this one would think  
 the Bishop had only asserted this, but offered at no proof.  
 But if you look into the *Exposition*, pag. 30, and 31. you  
 find that he has produced an Argument for it which you  
 know not how to Answer, and therefore prudently took  
 no notice of it. I meddle not to determine whether the  
 Proof he offers be satisfactory or not; but till you answer  
 it, it ought to go for something more than a Round Affir-  
 mation. But you add, " The World is yet a stranger to an  
 " *Perpetual Self-motion* of Natural Bodies, and yet the  
 " supposition of such a Motion is laid down by the same  
 " Author, as a Postulate from which is drawn the  
 " No



"No-necessity of a conserving Providence. But  
 who the World be a Stranger to this, 'tis not a Stran-  
 ger to false Accusations; and you here do your part to  
 make 'em yet more familiar; for in short, This Accusati-  
 on is absolutely false, 'tis a pure Invention of your own.  
 The Bishop no where asserts a perpetual Self-motion of  
 Natural Bodies, much less does he do it in order to the  
 making out the No-necessity of a Conserving Providence,  
 for he owns a Conserving Providence, as well as any bo-  
 dy else. All the Dispute is, Whether that be necessary  
 only to keep off what would put a stop to the Motion:  
 Or whether there be need of a continual new Causality  
 or Influence to keep the Motion going. 'Tis all but a Me-  
 taphysical Notion, which none, but what had a mind to  
 pick a quarrel, would make such a stir about, as you do.  
 But the Bishop's words, you say, are, *That Natural Agents*  
*must ever keep the Course in which they are once put, and*  
*that the Heavenly Orbs, as well as smaller Motions, must ever*  
*have rolled in one constant Channel, when they were once put*  
*into it.* I answer, These words are far from being an As-  
 sertion of a perpetual Self-motion of Natural Bodies,  
 which is what you charge the Bishop with; and that for  
 these Two Reasons. First, Because the Bishop supposes  
 the Heavenly Orbs to be put into this Motion by God,  
 and consequently to be moved by him, and not by them-  
 selves. And Secondly, There is no necessity of under-  
 standing by *ever*, an absolute and positive Eternity, but  
 rather any long Period of Time. And if it be in the pow-  
 er of a man to impress such a Motion upon a body, as  
 shall last, suppose, a Minute (which we all know it is)  
 without any new Influence from him when once it is out  
 of his hand, Why should it be thought impossible for  
 God to impress a Motion that shall last many Thousands  
 of Years without any new Influence or Causality? Think  
 of a good Reason for this at your leisure. But you say,  
 the..

the Bishop having advanced this as a self-evident Principle, from thence presently infers, *That Conservation by a Special Act is not necessary*. But this is not true: For First, The Bishop doth not advance this as a self-evident Principle, but rather grounds it upon the Proof before given, taken from hence, *viz.* That he thinks it an Absurdity to say, That every Created Being has a Natural Tendency to Annihilation, as he thinks it must have, if a new Act of Almighty Power is still necessary to keep it from falling back into Nothing: For this may be applied to Accidents as well as Substances, which may continue to be, as well as they, so long as Providence does but take care to keep off what might destroy 'em. But Secondly, Neither is it true that the Bishop presently infers as you say. No: I find him a great deal more modest than the *Coventry* Vicar. He only says, *In this respect it may seem that Conservation by a Special Act is not necessary*. Your next Sentence is not true neither. The words of it are these: "Nay, were it not, it seems, for the freedom of mens Actions, and the Changes that are wrought by them in this Earth and Air, a Providence might appear from this Author's Reasonings to be unnecessary for the Ordering not only of the Sublunary Bodies, but also of the Celestial Orbs. This, I say, is not true, nor can you ever prove it true, unless you can prove that there can be no such thing as Providence without *Conservation by a Special Act*, or without a *New Causality or Influence continually*. The Bishop is as much an Assertor of Providence as any man, only he thinks there does not need to be any constant, new, special Acts of it for the keeping That in Being, which God hath once given Being to. Thus a great many more have thought as well as he; without ever being impeached as Deniers of Providence. And whether he be in the right, or whether Conservation be a continual Creation, as others affirm,



affirm, is a matter of no great moment. If you had not had a great mind to pick a quarrel with your Betters, I'm satisfy'd you would never have made such a stir about it. But let me advise you for the future to write things that you can justify.

Your next Sentence is a gross and abominable Slander, it is in these words, *That God is both the Maker and Preserver of all things; is the Doctrine of the Article: That things when once Created, want not to be preserved by the same Infinite Power that made them, is the Comment of the Expositor.* But a man may look his eyes out before he finds any such Comment in the Expositor. The bottom of the Business is, That because the Vicar of *Coventry* has got a Nonsensical Imagination in his Cloudy Pate, that unless Consecration be a continued Creation, God cannot be the Preserver of all things, therefore my Lord of *Sa-*  
*um*, who is of another mind, and thinks what is once put into Being, needs not any new Act to keep it in Being, denies that God is the Preserver of all things. Alas, Man! The Article was never intended to determine the manner of God's preserving things. And he that holds that he does it by a continual Creation, has no more to plead for his Opinion from the Article, than he that supposes that God having once put things into Being and Order, does only after that watch over 'em by his Providence, to see that nothing shall disturb, discompose, or put 'em, or put a stop to their motions.

And now, my Dear Friend, I must tell thee plainly my thoughts. I remember I have heard formerly that thou wast of a Presbyterian Breed, and I am verily afraid there is something of that Leaven sticks by thee still. It is always their way to cavil against the Bishops, and to pick little, foolish, and groundless Quarrels with them. As thou hast been doing in thy Sermon: But I think I have said enough to convince any one, that all that is there  
said

said against the Bishop is either directly false and slanderous, or else very impertinent and silly.

I shall add no more, but only this, That if you really are, as you pretend, an Episcopal Divine, I desire you would consider, Whether you ought not to have had greater Respect for the Character of a Bishop, than to pick quarrels with one of them so needlessly, or to slander him so grossly as you have done. This I desire leave upon your Conscience, and so bid you *Farewell*.

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